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Commission on the Status of Women
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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: priority theme: women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development

Ministerial round table on financing for gender equality and women's empowerment in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Chair's summary

1. At its 3rd meeting, on 14 March 2016, the Commission on the Status of Women held a ministerial round table on financing for gender equality and women's empowerment in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, under the overall theme "Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development". The participants exchanged experiences, lessons learned and good practice in relation to the topic, with an emphasis on the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

2. The President of the National Council of Women of Egypt, Maya Morsy, chaired the round table. The Secretary-General of the Ibero-American General Secretariat, Rebeca Grynspan, served as moderator. High-level officials from 22 Member States participated in the round table.

3. Participants reaffirmed that making gender equality and women's empowerment a reality required dedicated and consistent funding. Prioritized and dedicated resource allocation was an urgent imperative, as was gender mainstreaming. They agreed that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with its comprehensive goals and targets, provided a historic opportunity to address gender inequality holistically and sustainably. That would require strong political commitment and increased investment from multiple and diverse sources. Many participants expressed concern that major gender equality gaps continued to exist

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and that much remained to be done to achieve the full implementation of the priorities identified in the Beijing Platform for Action.

4. Participants emphasized that the priorities identified in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development provided a road map to address the systemic barriers that hindered the full and effective implementation of gender equality commitments. They highlighted a need to link the action agreed to in the Action Agenda with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to successfully deliver on gender equality and women's empowerment objectives.

5. Participants agreed on the importance of generating domestic resources and allocating adequate public financing to achieve gender equality outcomes on a long-term basis. They gave examples of how gender-responsive fiscal policies and budgetary laws had been developed and implemented to enable Governments to increase spending in areas critical for women and girls, such as health, education, agriculture and social protection.

6. Participants stressed the importance of strong institutional mechanisms and planning frameworks to deliver results, including national gender equality and women's empowerment policies and action plans and gender mainstreaming in government planning and budgeting processes across sectors. Gender-responsive budgeting was increasingly being used to institutionalize gender equality and women's empowerment in government plans and budgets, at both the national and local levels, and to leverage resources for gender equality and women's empowerment commitments.

7. Strengthening accountability systems with regard to public budgets and spending had a role to play in increasing financing for gender equality and women's empowerment. Assessing the effectiveness of public allocations through audits and monitoring the impact of government interventions through gender analysis and assessments were critical. In that regard, participants highlighted the role of national mechanisms for gender equality and called for improved mandates, better resources and strengthened capacities to ensure their effective role in monitoring the implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment commitments. Many also stressed the importance of the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data in policymaking and planning, as well as in assessing the impact of public interventions on the lives of women and girls.

8. Participants reaffirmed the importance of diverse partnerships, such as public-private partnerships, South-South cooperation and partnerships between Governments, United Nations agencies and civil society, for financing and implementing gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives. Several highlighted the responsibility of the private sector and philanthropic organizations to contribute resources to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. An example was given of the use of revenue generated from private investment in petroleum and mining to increase financing for social services for women and girls. Partnerships between financial and public institutions could play a role in eliminating discriminatory practices relating to women's access to financial services.

9. Several participants highlighted the importance of official development assistance to support countries to achieve gender equality and women's

empowerment commitments. Many expressed concern at the low level of such assistance and the little share devoted to gender equality and women's economic empowerment. Participants called for an increase in and commitment to clear contributions in that regard in official development assistance. Countries in conflict or post-conflict situations required support to help them to meet the basic needs of women and girls, to address violence against women and girls and to provide services.

Measures to accelerate financing for gender equality

10. Participants suggested that transforming the commitments of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into action and accelerating the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action required urgent action. As a universal agenda, the new framework represented Governments' renewed political will and should be used as a basis to mobilize and allocate the resources necessary to close all gender equality gaps.

11. Participants called for revenue to be mobilized and resources redistributed efficiently to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. They suggested that the capacity of government institutions at the national and local levels should be increased to ensure the development of gender-responsive plans and budgets. Gender equality mechanisms needed to be strengthened to monitor public spending, including through the collection and use of sex-disaggregated data.

12. It was emphasized that gender equality was not an expense, but an investment. All actors should work together through multi-stakeholder partnerships, increased domestic resources and targeted official development assistance and private sector engagement and accountability, to develop that investment and support the greatest emerging market — women.